Nixon Trying to Please All Factions

By Jack Anderson

President Nixon, in his eagerness to present his best possible face to both the conservative South and liberal North, is caught in a political squeeze.

He has encouraged such conservatives as Attorney General John N. Mitchell and Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) to believe that he is a conservative at heart and that he will follow their "Southern strategy."

They want him to write off the Northern states and concentrate on building Republican power in the Southern and Western states.

At the same time, the President has encouraged such moderates as Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Robert H. Finch and Senate GOP Leader Hugh Scott (Pa.) to believe that he is really a moderate at heart and that he will follow their "Northern strategy."

They believe he should hold to the middle of the road and concentrate his efforts on the big, Northern industrial states that have swung most elections in the past.

Unhappily for Mr. Nixon, many Northerners now have the idea that he is listening to Mitchell and Thurmond. And many Southerners have the impression that he is listening to Finch and Scott.

The President has insisted to friends that he really wants to be President of all the people. But his efforts to please all factions are beginning to have precisely the opposite effect.

Note: Mr. Nixon has been equally ambidextrous in explaining his Vietnam views to political leaders. Such doves as Sens. Mike Mansfield, (D-Mont.) and George Aiken (R-Vt.) have come away from the White House persuaded that the President is doing all in his power to de-escalate the war and disengage from Vietnam. But such hawks as Sens. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) and John Tower (R-Tex.) have concluded from their White House talks that the President intends to stand up to the Communists.

Roundabout to Rome

The House Foreign Affairs Committee is quietly lining up an Air Force jet to fly members and their wives around the world after the Christmas holidays.

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The official excuse is to conduct an Asian study, but the tentative itinerary calls for more time in Rome than at most Asian stops.

In a private memo to members of the Asian subcommittee, staff consultant Harry C. Cromer explains: "Chairman Thomas E. Morgan (D-Pa.) has approved a study mission to Asia during the period January 10-31, headed by (subcommittee) Chairman William T. Murphy, (D-Ill.).

"A jet plane has been requested from the Department of Defense and, for protocol reasons, wives have been approved to accompany the members."

The main stops will be Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Rome, all famous for their tourist attractions.

Inside Items

Sinister Saigon—The Pentagon has picked up reports that GI heroin addicts have been murdered in Saigon by dope dealers who substituted sodium cyanide or potassium cyanide for heroin. This method has been used, according to the rumor, to eliminate GIs who welshed on their narcotics debts and sought one last shot of heroin on the house. What may have prompted the rumor is the fact that heroin users sometimes touch their finger to the stuff and taste it to make sure it has heroin's characteristic bitterness. Cyanide, which could easily be laced with the white, powdery narcotic, is also bitter. Military investigators, unable to verify any of the reported bizarre deaths, are skeptical. While heroin is easy to find in Saigon's fetid streets, the Army has found only a few dozen heroin addicts among Vietnam GIs.

Right-Wing Endorsement—The Veterans of Foreign Wars generally stick to such good works as keeping GI pensions abreast of inflation. And because its members are of all political persuasions, it seldom endorses anyone more controversial than the Boy Scouts. Thus it came as a surprise when VFW Commander Ray Gallagher, on VFW stationery, gave an emotional endorsement to a right-wing youth group, the Young Americans for Freedom. Gallagher's letter was reproduced and widely circulated by YAF. "YAF is the only nationally organized student group capable of defeating the SDS revolutionaries," he wrote. He also urged VFW members to send up to $500 to the right-wingers. By playing politics, Gallagher may have jeopardized the VFW's tax-exempt status.

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